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FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Date: April 14, 2004

File No.: COO94401

From: John R. Uren

To: Examiner George NGUYEN, Group Art Unit 3723
Appln. Serial No. 09/611,625. Technology Center 3700
URGENT COMMUNICATION

Facsimile No.: (703) 872-9306
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Firm: United States Patent and Trademark Office

City: Washington, D. C. 20236

Number of pages being transmitted (including this page): 2

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MESSAGE: PLEASE CONVEY THIS COMMUNICATION TO EXAMINER
NGUYEN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AS HE IS AWAITING IT. THANK YOU.

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5/24/04*

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FACSIMILE MEMORANDUM FOR EXAMINER NGUYEN (703 872-9306)United States Patent 5,000,651

Mr. Nguyen. Further to our conversation earlier today, we have had a good look at the '651 patent you called to my attention in our telephone conversation.

Principally, Akagawa et al's device does not transfer a disk between workstations. The device taught in Akagawa et al merely moves a disk from a horizontal to a vertical position or, alternatively, from a vertical to a horizontal position. While a transfer between workstations of the disk is contemplated (see col. 1, lines 14-17), such a transfer will be done by a different mechanism from that mechanism described in the '651 patent. Reference is made to col. 1, lines 46-51, where the problem of moving a disk away from a polishing sheet is set out and where another technique [a transportable cassette] is contemplated to transfer the disk between workstations once it is removed (using the described and inventive disk remover).

The Akagawa et al device 20 moves a set of grippers 42 (Fig. 4) into the central hole of the disk 60, grasps the hole and moves the disk 60 off the polishing sheet 11 to a horizontal position (Fig. 2 - dotted lines) where it may more easily be removed from the mechanism 20 for subsequent processing. The patent spends almost all of its time describing the complicated mechanical motion required to allow the grippers 42 to grip the central hole in the disk 60.

Independent claims 1, 16 and 19 of the present application all require movement between and working on the disks at subsequent workstations and Akagawa et al do not contemplate this at all except by different mechanisms. So we submit that the present claims patentably distinguish over this reference without further amendment.

Kind regards.

John R. Uren
14 April 2004
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